

‘What Can We Do to Talk More?’: Analysing language learners’ online interaction

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Abstract

© 2018, Hacettepe University. All rights reserved. Previous studies have pointed out the need to consider carefully how digital tools are presented in schools to ensure their use meets authentic needs for today’s knowledge society. This implies that learning tasks should be planned so students’ practice with technological and digital resources such as videoconferencing and text chats resembles potential communicative situations they may face outside the classroom. Along these lines, this article analyses a 44-minute Skype videoconferencing session involving two small groups of middle school students who are studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The data come from a wider-scale telecollaborative project between two classes, one in Sweden and another in Spain, in which the students had to collaborate on a public awareness raising initiative regarding the Syrian refugee crisis. Applying a multimodal Conversation Analysis (CA) approach, the study aims to ‘unpack’ the complexity of the multiple resources used by the participants during the interaction. In particular, the article focuses on how the learners use multiple resources to creatively mediate their communication and to resolve problems that emerge during their interaction in the foreign language. The findings of the analysis can help identify key foci for task design in similar online foreign language learning settings.

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Keywords

Conversation Analysis (CA), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Social semiotics, Technology, Telecollaboration

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